

SANTA FE LAND IMPROVEMENT CO., OFFICE BUILDING HABS NO. CA-2306-A
16915 Avenida de Acacias
Rancho Santa Fe
San Diego
California

HABS
CAL
37-RANCF,
4A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Building Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

SANTA FE LAND IMPROVEMENT COMPANY, OFFICE BUILDING

HABS No. CA-2306 A

HABS
CAL
37-RANSE
4A

Location: 16915 Avenida de Acacias, at the corner of Paseo Delicias, Rancho Santa Fe, San Diego County, California. Rancho Santa Fe Block G, portions lots 1, 2, 12. San Diego County parcel number 266-285-01.

UTM zone 11, easterly 481055, northerly 3653250

Present Owner: Bowen Partners

Present Occupant: Rancho Santa Fe Properties

Present Use: real estate office and retail stores

Significance: Part of the group of commercial buildings erected in 1922 by the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company on Block G in the Civic Center, this building was used for administrative and sales offices throughout the 1920s, and probably housed Lilian Rice's first office and drafting room in Rancho Santa Fe.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1922. An article by Lilian Rice, "More Building in 1928 than ever Before," (Rancho Santa Fe Progress 1 no. 7 [January 1928]: 11, 14) recalls:

Looking back five years, to November of 1922 when actual work began at Rancho Santa Fe, we find each year marking another achievement . . .

It was an important day when ground was broken for the Guest House, the first building in the Civic Center. The office group and garage quadrangle followed soon afterward. (p. 14)

2. Architect: Lilian Jenette Rice
3. Original and Subsequent Owners: Chain of Ownership taken from Assessment Records, Santa Fe Irrigation District, Rancho Santa Fe, and Santa Fe Land Improvement Company Deed Records, Collection of Reginald M. Clotfelter:

1922-26 title to lot 1, Block G owned by Santa Fe Land Improvement Company

1/24/28 title to portions lots 1, 2, 11, 12 owned by Glenn A. and Ida May Moore, Rancho Santa Fe (sales contract C-350)*

1931 title reacquired by Santa Fe Land Improvement Company

November 1938 title to portions of lots 1, 2, 12, Block G acquired by Arthur R. and Agnes E. Bishop

1939-57 owned by Carl F. and Emily Bertshinger

1958-86 owned by Robert A. Henneg and H. Lois Henneg

December 1986 purchased by Bowen Partners.

*Some kind of lot reorganization or renumeration seems to have taken place on parts of Block G during the period the second period of ownership by the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company, so that "portions of lots 1, 2, 11, 12" seems to refer to the previous "lot 1."

4. Original plans and construction: Although no original plans for this building have been found, two preliminary sketches have been located (included here as supplemental material). These drawings are undated and unsigned, although they are by the hand of Lilian Rice, and probably date to early 1922. The first is an aerial perspective of Blocks F and G in the Civic Center of Rancho Santa Fe. The second, more detailed, drawing is of the Paseo Delicias and Via de Santa Fe streetscapes of Block G. The drawings depict a one-story, four-bay elevation on each of the two street facades. On each facade there are four identical and symmetrically placed openings; all are elliptically arched French windows, and have iron grills. On the second drawing the windows also have molded plaster surrounds with prominent keystones. Each of the four corners of the building is topped by a dome-like projection above the parapet. In the area between the projections and below the parapet there is a pent roof of Spanish tile; the roof itself is flat. The second drawing also places a water table at the base of the structure.

Although the first drawing shows the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company office building as rectangular, instead of the one-room deep, L-shaped structure that was built, and neither drawing records the location of the original main entrance door on Paseo Delicias, they accurately anticipate the appearance of the two street facades as recorded in early views. As built, the two openings at the southwest corner of the building are slightly wider than those of the other bays. Only three of the dome-like

projections were actually built, one on each of the three corners which face the streets. Early photographs also show a heavy, side-hung, wooden door on the south side of the Paseo Delicias facade. The building was stuccoed and then painted, and the water table was given a different, darker color than the rest of the structure.

5. Alterations and additions: All of the window grills have been removed, and awnings have been added over all of the openings. Most of the original openings have been replaced. On the Paseo Delicias facade (from north to south): the first window has been replaced; the second window has been turned into a door; the third window is original; the fourth opening, originally the door, is now a window. On the Avenida de Acacias facade (from west to east): the first window has been replaced; the second window has been replaced; the third window has been replaced by a door, and a stoop and rail have been added; the fourth window has its left side replaced. Several enlargements have been made to the rear of the building. The dates for these additions and alterations are unknown, although they had begun by at least 1935 (see Connie Clotfelter, Echoes of Rancho Santa Fe, photo p. 49).

- B. Historical context: This building was one of a group of three commercial structures (also HABS No. CA-2306 B and HABS No. CA-2306 C) erected in the Civic Center in Rancho Santa Fe in late 1922. During the first eight years of the community, the building was used as administrative, sales, architectural and engineering offices for the employees of the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company, which had sponsored the Rancho Santa Fe development. It probably housed the first Rancho Santa Fe office of resident architect Lilian Rice (until 1928), and also the office of the surveyor and engineer Will King, who was responsible for much of the field survey work done during the planning and construction of Rancho Santa Fe's road system. (Col. Charles R. Nelson, "Memorandum Notes for the Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society," pp. 6, 9.)

In 1928, the Land Improvement Company's holdings were bought out by a group of Pasadena and Los Angeles businessmen acting for the Rancho Santa Fe Corporation. By 1930, however, the Corporation was bankrupt and the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company was forced to repossess their land. From 1932 through 1939, the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company's headquarters were located in this building. Their local manager, Reginald M. Clotfelter, later owned the rowhouse at 6112 Paseo Delicias (HABS No. CA-2310). In 1939, after the property was purchased by the Bertschingers, it was leased to Sidney R. Nelson, former manager of the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company, and owner of the rowhouse at 6118 Paseo Delicias (HABS No. CA-2311), for use as a real estate office. Nelson continued to use the property as offices until his death in May 1963. Since that time, it has housed a variety of retail stores and real estate offices.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: The Santa Fe Land Improvement Company office building is notable for its symmetry and use of classical architectural elements (while still retaining a Spanish flavor through the application of Spanish tile, iron grills, and stucco) which serve to give a sense of stability and security to the structure appropriate for both its use as an office building for the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company and its physical position as the first building on the commercial strip of Paseo Delicias.
2. Condition of Fabric: Despite numerous interior alterations, the exterior fabric of the building remains good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: This L-shaped building, with street facade dimensions of 51' and 52' wide, is one story high. Its two street facades are symmetrical, with four bays each. There is a room offset into the interior corner of the "L," originally used as a washroom. There have been numerous infill buildings added to the courtyard side of the building.
2. Foundations: A poured concrete water table of approximately 2' in height serves as the foundation.
3. Walls: Stucco over wood frame.
4. Structural system, framing: Wood-framed construction.
5. Stoops: A brick stoop has been added to the third opening on the Avenida de Acacias facade.
6. Chimneys: none.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The original heavy, wooden, side-hung entrance door has been removed. Doors are now at the second opening on the Paseo Delicias facade, and at the third opening on the Avenida de Acacias facade.
 - b. Windows and shutters: The third opening on the Paseo Delicias facade retains its original elliptical-arched ten-light French window. All other original windows have been replaced. The original decorative iron window grills were replaced before 1935; the replacements are now removed.

There are molded plaster surrounds with prominent keystones around each opening.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The roof is flat with parapet, covered with built-up asphalt and gravel roofing material.
- b. Cornice, pent: There is a thin plastered cornice with a simple profile at the top of the parapet, and a slightly more elaborately molded cornice at the three street facade corners, below the dome-like projections. There is a pent roof on both street facades, in the area below the parapet and in between the projections. It is made of regularly laid Spanish tile.
- c. Domes: There are three dome-like projections which top the parapet at the three corners of the building visible from the street. They are made of wooden frame and chicken wire, then plastered over and painted.

9. Decorative features: The original decorative iron window grills have been removed. The iron street lamps are not original.

- G. Description of Interior: The original spatial arrangement of the interior of this structure was not documented, and has been severely altered, probably beginning in the late 1920s. Today, the interior spaces are used by two offices, both of which have erected modern dividing walls and other conveniences.
- D. Site: This building is located on the southwest corner of Block G in the Civic Center of Rancho Santa Fe. It faces east onto Paseo Delicias and south onto Avenida de Acacias.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings:

Preliminary sketches for Block G and Blocks G and F, Civic Center, Rancho Santa Fe. Unsigned and undated. Location of originals unknown. Photographs of sketches in the collection of the University Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara.

B. Early Views:

"Douglas Fairbanks-Mary Pickford Fairbanks" Scrapbook, Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society Archives.

Clotfelter, Connie. Echoes of Rancho Santa Fe. Rancho Santa Fe:
Conreg, 1985. pp. 28, 49, 68.

Photographs, Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society Archives.

Photographs, Ticor Collection, San Diego Historical Society.

Photographs, Union Title Insurance and Trust Company Historical
Collection, San Diego Historical Society.

Rancho Santa Fe Progress 1 no. 3 (September 1927): 4; 1 no. 12 (June
1928): 5; 2 no. 3 (September 1928): 4.

Shippey, Lee. "Rancho Santa Fe - California's Perfectly Planned
Community." Architect and Engineer 76 (February 1924). Reprint.
n.p., n.d.

C. Interviews

Reginald Clotfelter, telephone interview with Lauren Farber, 24 July
1991.

Charles Nelson, telephone interview with Lauren Farber, 24 July 1991.

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Nelson, Charles. "Earlier Years in San Diego and Rancho Santa Fe."
1989. Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society Archives.

_____. "Memorandum Notes for the Rancho Santa Fe Historical
Society." 1991. Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society
Archives.

Charles Nelson, Laredo, Texas, to Lauren Farber, Rancho Santa Fe,
California, TLS, 18 July 1991.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Clotfelter, Connie. Echoes of Rancho Santa Fe. Rancho Santa Fe:
Conreg, 1985.

Eddy, Lucinda Liggett. "Lillian Jenette Rice: The Lady as
Architect." M.A. thesis, University of San Diego, 1985.

_____. "Lillian Jenette Rice: Search For A Regional Ideal."
Journal of San Diego History 29 (Fall 1983): 262-285.

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Gebhard, David, and Robert Winter. A Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles and Southern California. Santa Barbara, CA: Peregrine Smith, 1977.

Rice, Lilian J. "More Building in 1928 than ever Before." Rancho Santa Fe Progress 1 no. 7 (January 1928): 11, 14.

E. Supplemental Material:

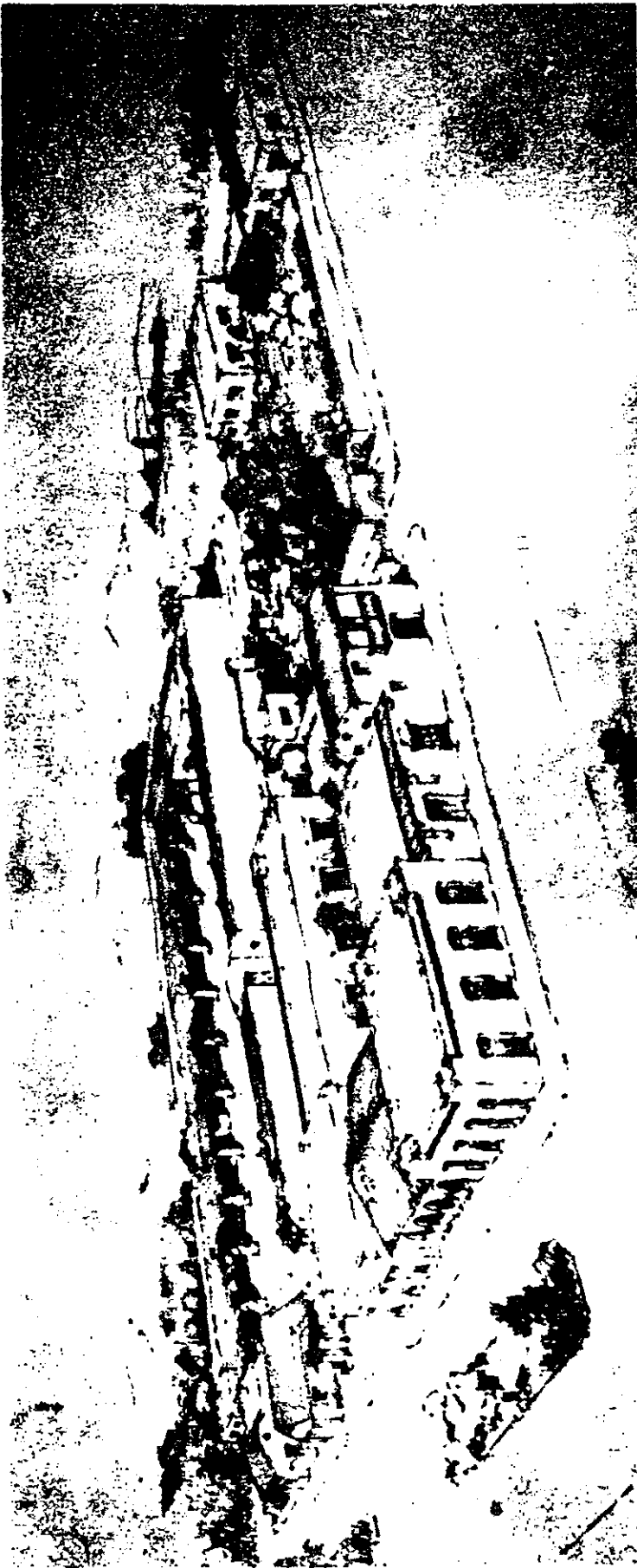
Page 8: Preliminary sketch, Blocks G and F, Civic Center, Rancho Santa Fe. Photograph in the collection of the University Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara.

Page 9: Preliminary sketch, Block G, Civic Center, Rancho Santa Fe. Photograph in the collection of the University Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara.

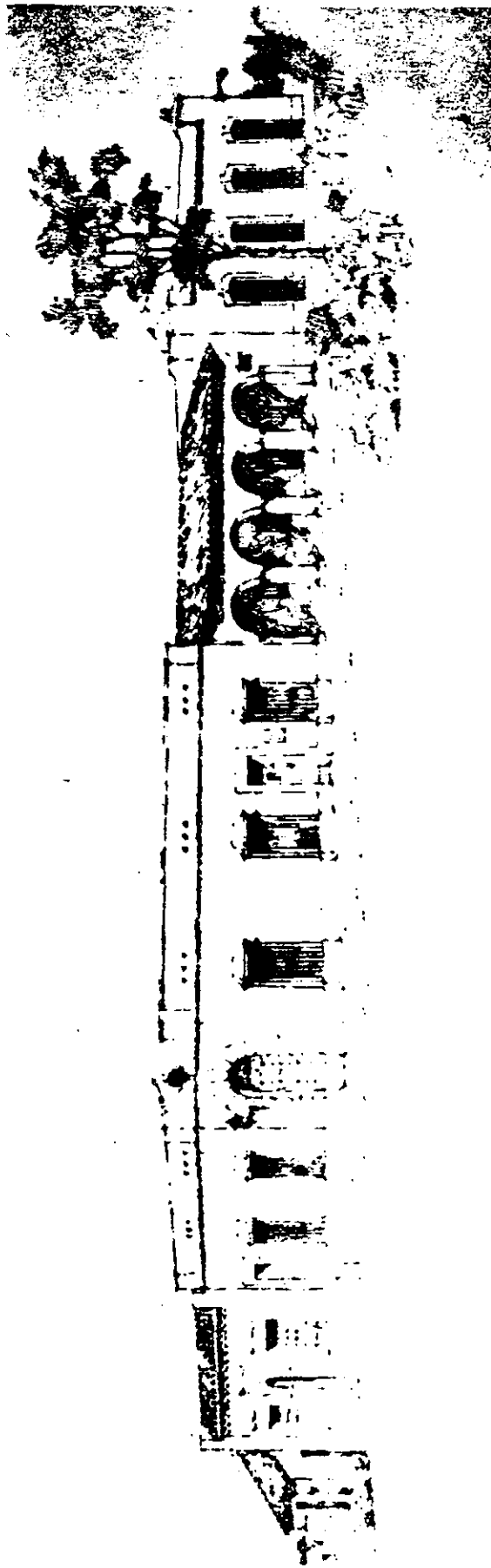
Prepared by: Lauren Farber
HABS Project Historian
Rancho Santa Fe, CA
June 1991

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society, Inc. and Rancho Santa Fe Association. Under the direction of Robert J. Kapsch, Chief, Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), and Paul Dolinsky, Chief, Historic American Buildings Survey and Project Leader, the documentation was completed in the HABS field office at Rancho Santa Fe, California during the Summer of 1991 by Professor John P. White (Texas Tech University), Project Supervisor; Architectural Technicians Sheri L. Bonstelle (Columbia University); Juan Tampe (Catholic University of America); Piotr Trebacz (Warsaw University of Technology, Poland, U.S./I.C.O.M.O.S.); E. Matthew Walter (University of Hawaii at Manoa); and Architectural Historian Lauren Farber, Sally Kress Tompkins Fellow (University of Delaware).



Preliminary sketch, Blocks G and F, Civic Center, Rancho Santa Fe.
Photograph in the collection of University Art Museum, University of
California, Santa Barbara.



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California, Santa Barbara.